



Bulletin

The Robert McDougall Art Gallery

A bi-monthly publication containing news, views, and reviews of activities at the Robert McDougall Art Gallery.

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Hospital Murals Project

Hospital staffs try to make their institutions as friendly as possible knowing that one of the best aids to recovery is a positive, cheerful atmosphere. Nevertheless, the sheer size of some of our larger hospitals can work against an informal feeling with long corridors full of bustling staff giving the patient or visitor an impression of institutional impersonality.

The North Canterbury Hospital Board, recognising the need to "soften" the formality of its hospital corridors and waiting rooms, approached the gallery in 1980 for advice and how to best decorate the public areas of their buildings.

The result was a scheme under which a team of recent graduates from the School of Fine Arts, employed by the gallery through the Labour Department's Project Employment Programme would execute murals for the Hospital Board.

The first assignment was the Christchurch Public Hospital, a mural artist's paradise with hectares of bare walls. Four artists, Grant Banbury, Ian Laughlin, Eddie Walton and Michelle Beaufoy carried out wall decorations over a six month period in 1980.

The Princess Margaret Hospital was the next to receive murals with Ian Laughlin and Eddie Walton being joined by the two new graduates, Michael Armstrong and Gary Collins.

Each artist worked with a specific area in mind, conceiving their motifs to not only occupy a particular space but to have a psychological purpose as well.

Michael Armstrong, for example, spent hours in the waiting room of the Princess Margaret Hospital X-ray Department observing its visitors. He noted that they seldom talked to each other but sat wrapped in their own thoughts. His solution was to devise a work which would attract the attention of the visitors and distract them from their sometimes anxious feelings.

Placing original, boldly colourful abstract works in a hospital setting could have drawn a negative reaction from staff members who may have felt their work areas invaded by unfamiliar images. In the case of the murals so



Murals at the Princess Margaret Hospital.

far installed an initially cautious reception has turned to their being welcomed as constructive additions to the workplace. Apart from their intrinsic artistic qualities, the hospital murals are excellent conversational ice-breakers, a valuable asset when you are calming a nervous patient or simply striking up a conversation with a nurse.

Night Time Alarms

The electronic infra red heat and microwave security systems which guard every inch of the Gallery are 100% efficient. 200% would have been the estimate of Gordon Ducker the Gallery Custodian, who this year has been called out more often than he cares to contemplate, to false alarms.

When the security alarms are activated at the security firm, Gordon climbs out of a warm bed to rush down to the Gallery where he finds a group of policemen with a guard dog waiting. Inevitably they report no disturbance around the perimeter of the building and a check of the interior has up until recently always drawn a blank.

After a particularly irksome spate of uneventful callouts the security system was examined for faults and spaces checked for dangling threads or flapping curtains, since the tiniest movement in the empty Gallery can set off the alarm.

Indications were that one specific area held the gremlin or poltergeist causing the trouble. Technical fiddling with the equipment produced no reduction in the number of false alarms. Gordon Ducker, at a last resort, set a trap. Result, one very small, very dead mouse.

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Image and Idea

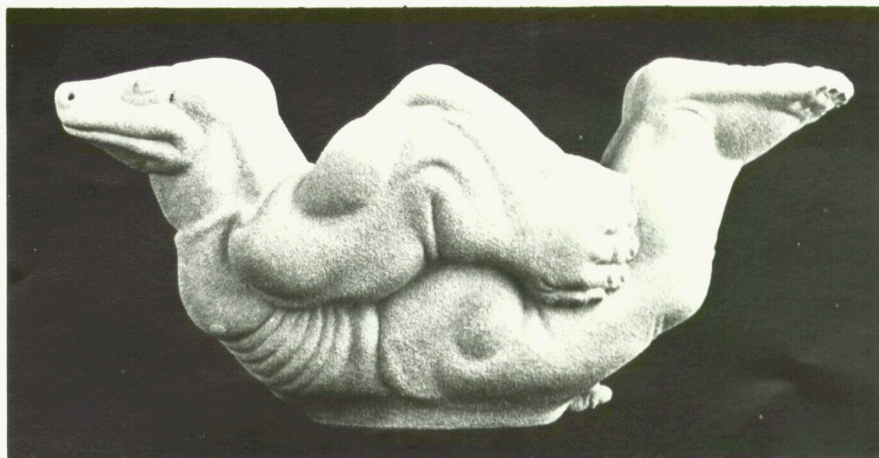
A view of contemporary ceramics in Britain

September 12 — October 18

The plasticity of clay invites the potter to modelling. This, the possibility of colouring the clay and the colour-and-light effects inherent in even the simplest glaze arouse the potter's decorative instincts and turns the potter into an artist. As a craftsman the potter is concerned with the exploitation of the clay and fitness for use; as an artist he is concerned too with aptness of decoration and such things as proportion, mass, rhythm and colour. Like every artist, the potter will work within the artistic context of their own generation, for like all art forms pottery reflects the art of its own age and often contributes conspicuously to it.

Clay vessels can be shaped by a variety of means: By throwing the wet clay on a wheel, pulling and pressuring the plastic medium into the desired shape, by laborious hand-modelling in superimposed coils or round a solid core, or by moulding and casting, while hardened, unfired surfaces can be tooled and turned.

The 13 potters whose works make up this 79 exhibit exhibition present to us as wide a range of techniques as are available to a potter today. Works which sit comfortably within the tradition of finely proportioned, utilitarian vessels, to works which sit equally comfortably in the new schools of ceramic sculpture often with associated social comment.



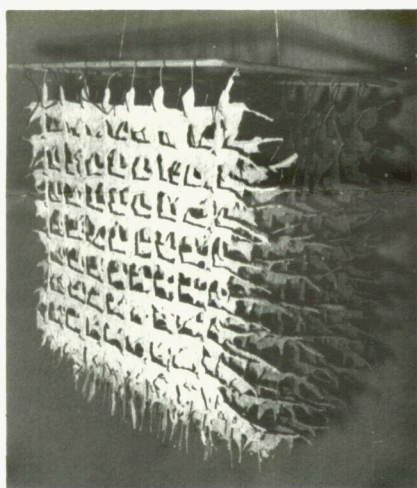
Yellow Reptile-man Bowl, Anthony Bennett.

As the title of the exhibition suggests a conscious manipulation of material which is wholly at the service of the makers imagination, Ruth and Allan Barrett-Danes have produced a series of images which tempers the horror to the more decorative details of delicately textured porcelain frogs clinging to bland containers. By contrast Anthony Bennett's earthenware bowls are formed by chunky, hybrid creatures, half man half reptile glazed in searing colour.

Many potters have moved their works closer to sculpture as Paul Astbury's ceramic and aluminium works evidence where each object he builds is deliberately shattered then partly rebuilt to express his interest in the continuous process of decay and renewal of matter.

Whereas many potters might choose to accept only the effects of firing on their pots others such as Jacqueline Poncelet choose to carve and even pierce the surface of her containers, turning the surface into thin geometrically shaped slabs, incised and painted with slanted chequerboard patterns.

This exhibition offers a view of some recent objects made in ceramics and is also a partial view of the current scene in Britain today. The exhibition is recorded in a richly colour illustrated catalogue, \$2.50, with a comprehensive text on British ceramics and the exhibition by John Houston. The exhibition was organised by the Fine Arts Department of the British Council and toured in New Zealand by the New Zealand Art Gallery Directors Council.



Paper Grid Series, Number 3, Susan Lyman

"Pulp" Work in Handmade Paper — September 26 — November 15

Paper has been defined as "a substance made in the form of thin sheets or leaves from rags, straw, bark, wood or other fibrous material" Over the centuries since this craft was first recorded in China in the year 105AD, the methods and materials used in making paper have remained basically the same. Moreover, the emphasis has remained

largely on the refining of the paper surface for writing and printing as a medium of communication.

Recently, however, there has been a break away from viewing paper in the purely two-dimensional sense as artists around the world have become aware of the wide-ranging possibilities involved in work 'in' rather than 'on' paper. More and more artists have begun to experiment with handmade paper, seeing it not only as a medium for the graphic arts, but also as a structural object which can be moulded and casted, tinted and dyed, painted with ink, acrylic, oils or watercolours, or even stitched with silk thread, in the process of its becoming an art form in its own right. In addition, the wide variety of materials that can be used for making paper, from recycled envelopes to artichokes and banana leaves, are a further and rich source of inspiration.

This exhibition organised by the Wellington City Art Gallery brings together examples of highly imaginative work by New Zealand and overseas artists. The New Zealanders, Kay Billings, Chris and Annette Booth, Kate Coolahan and Gordon Crook exhibit a variety of collage and free standing paper works as well as examples of sculpture incorporating native flax paper and a range of paper



The Face, Frank Gallo.

samples made from different local raw materials.

The British, American and Japanese artists exhibit a wide variety of works, from large collage works incorporating leaves, linen, wire and dyed natural fibre pulps to cast paper reliefs and examples of fine papers illustrating various textural and printing effects, as well as a length of unprinted tapa cloth from Polynesia.

Sabrina's Garden

'Sabrina's Garden' by Frances Hodgkins was recently acquired by the Robert McDougall Art Gallery. It is the first pencil drawing by this artist to be purchased for the public collection.

As a work it forms an important part of a series of drawings and watercolours exploring the still life in the landscape, produced during the summer of 1932 whilst the artist was holidaying at Bridgnorth, Shropshire, on the river Severn.

The exuberant spontaneity of Frances Hodgkins' reaction to her surroundings on this occasion is ably reflected in 'Sabrina's Garden' and even more so in the once controversial watercolour from the same series 'The Pleasure Garden', also in the gallery's collection.



Sabrina's Garden, Frances Hodgkins.



Gallery Guides conducting a tour.

Gallery Tours

Senior citizens who wish to be met at the Art Gallery door and conducted around the exhibitions may phone 791-660 — and ask to speak to Barbara at McDougall Art Gallery who will make arrangements for the visits.

Also we would like to remind you of the regular services of the Gallery Guides. There is a guide on duty each Saturday and Sunday from 2.30pm waiting to guide individuals or small groups of Gallery visitors around the current exhibitions and to discuss with them the background to the works on display. Just ask at the desk for the Guide. They will be delighted to share the exhibitions with you.

During the week the Gallery Education Officer will be pleased to welcome groups who would like to be shown around the Gallery. So if you are a member of a club or a special group who would like to make a visit to the Gallery as a club outing don't forget to contact us.

Special events for the Friends of the McDougall during September and October

September 6th — Sunday Concert
3pm. A programme of original rock music presented by *Stiff Glue*.

September 13th. Sunday 5.00pm.
Preview of the *Image and Idea* Exhibition.

Mini-Spring Festival at the McDougall. A special series of Sunday Concerts at the Gallery.

October 4th. Sunday 3pm. A Jazz Concert presented by the *Ian Edwards Jazz Ensemble*.

October 11th. Sunday 3pm. Classical Guitar Music by Suzanne Court.

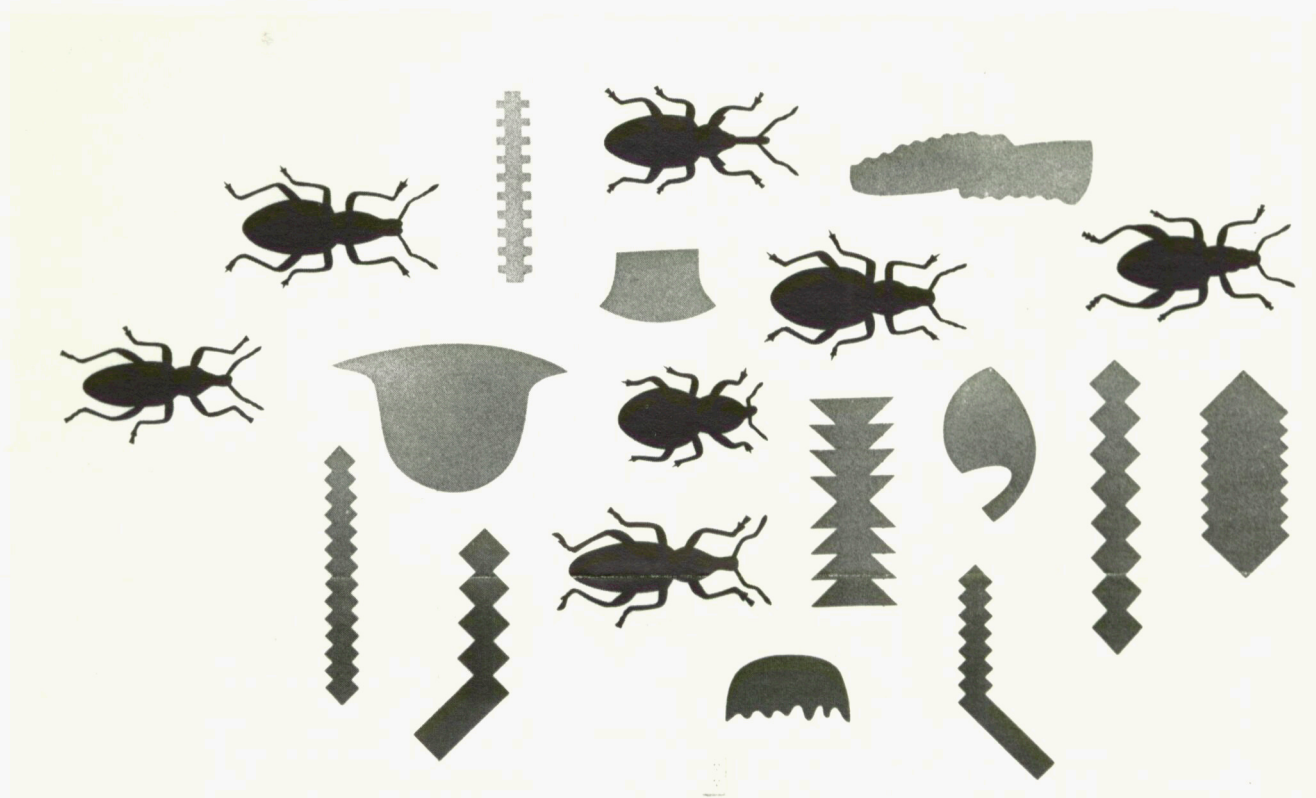
October 18th. Sunday 3pm. A Dvorak Serenade for Wind in D Minor, the *Ilam Wind Ensemble* conducted by John Pattinson.

OutReach

At present, with the ending of the contract with The Flying Hat Troupe the Gallery is concentrating on two special projects. One is a special

display hexagon which you will be encountering at a wide variety of public venues throughout the city.

The other is *The Mind's Eye*. This is a special programme of poetry and prose centred around the artist's or the poet's response to New Zealand landscape, particularly in the Canterbury region. To accompany a selection of original poems by Launa Anker a small number of landscape paintings from the Gallery's permanent collection are taken to special venues within the city. This is proving an attractive welcome addition to our OutReach Programme and if you are interested in more details or perhaps a visit from *The Mind's Eye* you are asked to contact the Gallery.



Black Insects, Red Primitives 1980, Richard Killeen.

Acquisitions

The following works have been recently purchased.

Billy Apple
Sold
Screenprint

Derek Ball
Exclusion
Moulded perspex

Frances Hodgkins
Sabrina's Garden
Pencil

Colin Lovell-Smith
The Destruction of O-tu-matu Goose Bay 1939
Oil on Canvas Board

Peter Ransom
Record of a Defunct Coffee Table
Etching 3/50 imp

Denys Watkins
The Bride 1980
Etching 5/30

Stanley Palmer
Rakitu I 1980
Etching/aquatint/bamboo 08/60

Ralph Hotere
Sangro Litany
Acrylic on canvas

Pat Hanly
Golden Age 1980
Board/Acrylic enamel

Richard Killeen
Black Insects, Red Primitives 1980
Acrylic Lacquer/aluminium

Robert Ellis
Rakaumangamanga 1980
Oil on Canvas

Rata Lovell-Smith
Hawkins 1934
Oil on Canvas/Board

The following works have been placed on loan from the Christchurch Technical Institute Memorial Hall Collection.

William A Sutton
Painting (Grasses Series) 1970
Oil on Board

Tom Field
Acis
Woodblock

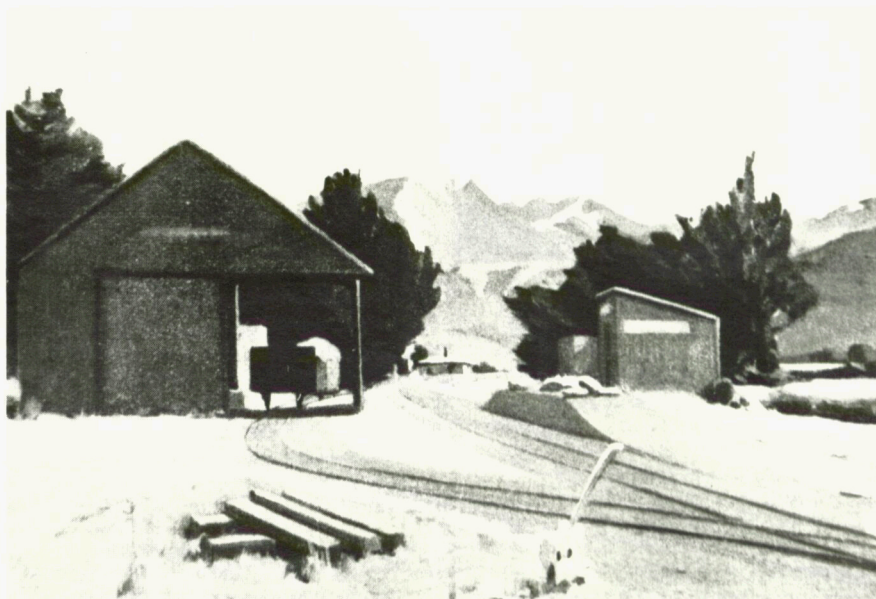
Carl Sydow
Drawing 5 X X 1975
Letra Line

Herbert McClintock
Untitled
Oil on Board

J M Thomasson
Water Carrier Bagdad
Ink drawing

Vivian Lynn
Talme 1970
Screen

J M Thomasson
The river Ashley
Pencil



Hawkins 1934, Rata Lovell Smith.